



## POST-MODERN INDIAN POETRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NISSIM EZEKIEL'S INDIA AS A POST- MODERN INDIAN POEM

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### ABSTRACT

*Nissim Ezekiel is one of the most popular names in Indian English poetry and this genius is known for his post-modernist approach in his poetry. As in the words of P. Lal, "After the death of Sri Aurobindo, Nissim Ezekiel is the first major voice that represents, more or less, the change of an era in the History of Indian English Poetry." In India is typical poem by Nissim Ezekiel where we neither find rhythm nor musically. In India is a wonderful example of longing and aspiration of the imaginative modern life that is full of absurdity and complexes. The element of self-criticism is also evident in this poem. It also shows the ugliness of modern life. In India, Nissim Ezekiel use different stanzas to describe the life of Indian people and India as a whole and therefore this poem is one of the greatest poems ever written by an Indian poet. Nissim Ezekiel has described the condition of the parties in India where the wives of India feel disturbed and unfit.*

**Key words:** Post Modernism, India, Sarcastic, Indianness, Modern life, Self-criticism, Somber, Indian wives.

### INTRODUCTION

Post Modernism is a kind of break from the modernist approaches and India is no exception in this regard as far as its literature is concerned. Since the focus here is on the poetry, we will talk about the poetry and poets of Post-Modern Indian Literature. There are so many poets who have been remarkably good in the post-modern Indian English Literature with the like of A.K. Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, Kamala Das and Jayanta Mahapatra to name a few



and the other contemporaries like Partha sarathy, Gieve Patel, Keki Daruwala, Arun Kolatkar, Eunice De Souza, Agha Shahid Ali, Dilip Chitre, etc, the most important of all these poets is Nissim Ezekiel who has been regarded as a leader of all these because of his unique approach to the poetry being famous for his 'Indianness' in his poetry and the sarcasm on the modern life. As in the words of P. Lal, "After the death of Sri Aurobindo, Nissim Ezekiel is the first major voice that represents, more or less, the change of an era in the History of Indian English Poetry." (P. Lal, 1969)

Nissim Ezekiel is the leader of Post-Modern Indian poetry. He was born in 1924 in Bombay of Jewish parents. He made poetry to the central of his life. He was the first poet who has the discipline, self-criticism and mastery to Indian poetry. He was complete Indian poet in every sense and therefore, we found Indianness in most of his poems. Nissim Ezekiel won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of poems titled *Later Day Poems* and also won Padmashri in 1988. Ezekiel is one of those poets who have used Indianized English and for that R. Parthasarathy said, "The poems of Ezekiel imitate the idiolect features of English used by Gujarati speakers. Some of these features are also present in other Indian languages: the use of the present progressive tense for the simple present tense, un-English collocation of lexical items, and literal translation of phrases and idioms." (R. Parthasarathy, 1976)

*In India* is typical poem by Nissim Ezekiel where we neither find rhythm nor musically. This poem is divided into four parts. In first stanza, he discusses the religion. In third stanza, he discusses the condition of Indian wives in parties and in fourth stanza, he discusses the working women of India with British-Boss. *In India* is a wonderful example of longing and aspiration of the imaginative modern life that is full of absurdity and complexes. The element of self-criticism is also evident in this poem. It also shows the ugliness of modern life. However, Ezekiel has used the effective imagery in order to give authenticity to the poem along with the somber voice. Ezekiel describes the plights of the city life as he discusses beggars, peddlers, the women who bear tortures as they do not bring dowry, the virgins who are molested and other evils of the modern city life. Ezekiel in his sarcastic tone says that the children have lost their innocence and have been treated worse than animals. However, it has been seen that suffering is a part and parcel of the life of city and the poor women and the children are often seen at the receiving end of the grief, pain and suffering. However, Ezekiel has certainly tried to explore his thoughts and he even says that "I ride my elephant of thought." This poem is about the perspective of his own as far as modern India is concerned. The purpose of the poem is clear and direct as he wants to expose the ugliness of the modern life. This poem has been read as one of the most straight-forward and sarcastic poems written by the modern poets about the contemporary Indian society. Ezekiel has perfectly mastered the skill of presenting the harsh matters in somber way and this poem can be taken as a perfect example of that. However, the poem is one of the modern greats. In the first stanza, he discusses India as a country and also discusses the condition of India. He says;

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*All in noisy silence,  
Suffering the place and time;  
I ride my elephant of thought  
Cezanne slung around my neck. (L-1-4)*

In the second stanza, he discusses the religion in India which we can find in the following lines. Here, he talks about the Muslim boys:

*The copied, bullied stole in pairs  
They bragged about their love affairs  
They carved the tables broke the chairs  
But never missed their prayers. (L-5-8)*

In the third stanza, he discusses the condition of Indian wives in the new year's party. He says that;

*The wives of India Sit apart  
They do not drink,  
They do not talk,  
Of course they do not kiss. (L-9-12)*

In the fourth stanza, he discusses the condition of the working woman with British boss.

*After the cold beer and music on,  
She sat in disarray,  
The struggle had been hard,  
And not altogether successful. (L-13-16)*

So, *In India*, Nissim Ezekiel use different stanzas to describe the life of Indian people and India as a whole and therefore this poem is one of the greatest poems ever written by an Indian poet.

Nissim Ezekiel has described the condition of the parties in India where the wives of India husbands sit apart because they are not the ones who drink beer and they cannot even dance because they are shy, and they do not even feel comfortable because they are not used to it. On the other hand, the husbands of these women are quite comfortable because they seem to have learned the art of flirting with the women. However, the common topics for the discussion here is the art and literature because these topics are considered as the topics of the



polished people. Thus, this picture is given by the poet is only to show the difference between two dissimilar classes of Indian society. Both these classes are quite different to each other. Thus, the plight, pain, suffering and the other evils of the Indian society have been beautifully mentioned of the realistic picture of society as he always wants to show it in his poems.

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